

Timely research papers about COVID-19 in China

The 2019 novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19; previously known as 2019-nCoV) outbreak that originated from Wuhan, Hubei province, China, at the end of 2019 was declared a public health emergency of international concern on Jan 30, 2020, by WHO.¹ As a newly appearing infectious disease, COVID-19 garnered great research interest. According to a recent report in *Nature*,² at least 54 academic papers about COVID-19 were published in English-language journals by Jan 30, 2020.

We searched major Chinese databases including the China National Knowledge Internet and WANFANG Data. As of Feb 3, 2020, just 23 Chinese-language papers on COVID-19 were published. These publications mainly focused on epidemiology, clinical features of COVID-19, and the structure or genetics of severe acute respiratory syndrome corona virus 2 (SARS-CoV-2).

Many of the research papers about COVID-19 in international journals were written by researchers in China, which led to great concerns because these findings cannot directly benefit frontline health professionals and policy makers because of the language barrier. It is critical for health science to be published in English-language journals to facilitate communication and enable global coordination and timely epidemic response. However, some media were concerned that Chinese researchers within academic organisations concentrated on publishing papers in prestigious international journals but paid inadequate attention to epidemic prevention of COVID-19 and neglected to disseminate their findings within Chinese-language journals.^{3,4} A recent statement by the Ministry of Science and Technology of China also encouraged researchers to focus their efforts on epidemic

prevention and to publish their results in Chinese.⁵

The emphasis on publishing clinical research in English helps to facilitate knowledge exchange between Chinese scientists and the rest of the world. We hope the research community will make efforts to disseminate all findings relevant to the outbreak of COVID-19 in Chinese in addition to English publishing outlets.

For example, clinical research papers about COVID-19 and SARS-CoV-2 in any *Lancet* journal were translated into Chinese, and these translated Articles were provided rapidly to the public in China free of charge.

Broad dissemination in both Chinese and English will accomplish the goals of communicating timely and crucial findings to the international scientific community, while also disseminating this information to health-care workers on the frontline who need to understand the epidemiological and clinical features of COVID-19. This strategy will improve effective control strategies to ultimately contain the virus and protect the health of the public.

We declare no competing interests. Y-TX, WL, QZ, YJ, W-WR, and L-NZ contributed equally to this Correspondence.

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Published Online
February 17, 2020
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(20\)30375-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(20)30375-5)

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